Signs and Symptoms of Alcohol and Other Drugs

Select from a list signs and symptoms of substance abuse

Signs and Symptoms

- This presentation will give you a better understanding of the behavior and personality changes that you may see when a Soldier is abusing alcohol and/or other drugs.
- It will also give examples of the signs and symptoms users may experience WHILE under the influence of alcohol or another drug.

Signs and Symptoms – Behavior Changes

- Changes in peer group
  - Association with known abusers
  - Disassociation from old friends and family
- Argumentative
- Unusual borrowing of money
- Stealing
- Secretive behavior
- Avoids attention
- Decline in personal hygiene / physical appearance
- Trouble with the police (DUI, domestic dispute, etc)

Signs and Symptoms – Changes in Work Habits

- Frequent tardiness
- On-the-job absenteeism – especially Mondays
- Avoiding supervisors or coworkers
- Numerous personal problems or illnesses
- Neglecting details
- Continued procrastination
- Changes in attitude
- Withdrawal from responsibility

Signs and Symptoms – Alcohol

- Odor of alcohol
- Glazed over eyes
- Poor hygiene / physical appearance
- Degradation of work quality
- Absenteeism (especially Mondays)
- Flushed skin
- Loss of memory (blackouts)

<u>Types of alcohol</u> – beer, wine, wine coolers, liquors

Signs and Symptoms – Marijuana

- Changes in speech
  - Rapid / Loud Talking
  - Bursts of Laughter
- Forgetfulness during conversation
- *Red Eye* or inflammation in the whites of the eyes
- Extreme hunger (the “munchies”)
- Distinct body odor similar to the smell of burnt rope

<u>Other types of marijuana</u> – hashish/hash oil, sensimillia

Signs and Symptoms – Stimulants

- Dilated pupils
- Dry mouth (chapped lips)
- Frequent runny nose / nose bleeds
- Difficulty sitting / standing still
- Lack of appetite
- Very talkative, but changes subjects quickly
- Irritable / argumentative

<u>Types of stimulants</u> – Cocaine/Crack, Amphetamines, Methamphetamines (crank, ice, crystal meth, Ecstasy)

Signs and Symptoms – Depressants

- Lack of facial expression
- Flaccid appearance
- Slurred speech
- Glazed over eyes
- Flushed skin
- Lack of short term memory

<u>Types of depressants</u> – barbiturates, tranquilizers

Signs and Symptoms – Narcotics

- Lethargic
- Drowsiness (“nodding”)
- Lack of concentration
- Slurred speech
- Constricted (small) pupils
- Itchy skin
- Tracks, or scars, on the inner arms

Types of narcotics – heroin, opium, morphine, codeine

Signs and Symptoms – Inhalants

- Runny nose
- Watering eyes
- Lack of muscle control
- Loss of hearing
- Loss of coordination
- Body tremors or shaking
- Emotional instability (irritable / argumentative)

Types of Inhalants – glue, vapor producing solvents ("whip-its"), (household cleaners), propellants, nitrous oxide (laughing gas)

Signs and Symptoms – Hallucinogens

- Extremely dilated pupils
- Excessive perspiration
- Mood / behavior changes
- Distorted sense of sight
- Impaired judgment
- Nausea / vomiting
- Frequent anxiety attacks

<u>Types of hallucinogens</u> – LSD, mescaline, psilocybin (mushrooms)